

# The

# Northern

# Light

Featuring the people and events of First Congregational Christian Church of Anchorage

March 2017

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## Minister's Message

Rev. Johnathan C. Jones  
As we make our way to Easter we need to journey through Lent first.

In all honesty Lent is my absolute favorite season in the Christian calendar. Lent and Easter are full of vast landscapes, developing storylines, old voices, new faces, drama, plotting, suspense, excitement, joy and absolute nothingness. We experience the beauty of love whilst being painfully aware of the utter foolishness that selfishness, greed and pride brings. Ultimately, we experience anew the betrayal by a kiss. Followed by terrible torture, blasphemy and mockery. Concluding with the very familiar, but no less painful, death of God on a cross.

It is this one and only, yet always forever, moment in time when the entire world takes a collective gasp.

God is dead.

Lucifer has won.

At 3 pm the world goes black, the veil in the temple is torn, the earth has been broken. Eternity is no more. Paradise never existed. The kingdom of God is nothing more than a fool's dream.

The story isn't over, but this is where we shall pause in our retelling. Forty days and forty nights we have to remember, repent and reflect.

Yes, we will hear the word repent. And the words sin, confession, judgement, punish, sinner, hell. But more importantly we will hear the words love, forgive, accept, free.



"Loving God, we confess to you and to one another that we have not always been the people you have called us to be. We have failed you, we have failed each other and we have failed ourselves. We ask for humility when righting wrongs. We ask for wisdom when choosing future paths. We ask for love. Amen."

Sisters and Brothers! One fact remains that has not changed. God has loved you. God loves you now. God will always, always, ALWAYS, love you!!!!!!!!!!!!

Hear this Good News:

You are accepted, you are forgiven and you are free. Give thanks to God!

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During this year's seasons of Lent, Holy Week and Easter, we are being invited to experience and partake in a more traditional way. We will explore, primarily through liturgy and worship, the traditional approach of remember, repent, reflect. We will be offering times of meditation and praise, mourning and celebration. We will begin with our Ash Wednesday Service at 7:45 pm on March 1st. Every Tuesday beginning March 7<sup>th</sup>, at 5:30 pm we will take time to worship with our Mid-Week Taizé Service. Every Sunday morning at 8:47 am, we will be holding a Lenten Study Group and Discussion before church.

Our Palm Sunday Service takes place at 10:30 am on April 9<sup>th</sup>. Later that evening at 5:30 pm the Hosannas of Palm Sunday will give way to the somber and melancholy darkness of a traditional "Litany of the Passion." On Maundy Thursday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, at 5:30 pm, we will gather together in his name, we will share a meal and we will remember. Thus fulfilling the commandment we were given. Good Friday will be a time of mourning. From 3 pm to 5:30 pm we will have informal, self-led meditations and reflections based on the Stations of the Cross, followed by a traditional Good Friday Worship Service at 5:30 pm. From noon to sunset on Holy Saturday a labyrinth-inspired, self-directed retreat will be offered. On Easter Sunday, April 16<sup>th</sup> the celebration begins with our 8 am Easter Sunrise Service and Breakfast followed by our annual Easter Sunday Service at 10:30 am.

Ask Rev. JJ for more details.

### **For Your Calendar**

- Feb 28- Shrove Tuesday, 6 pm
- March 1- Ash Wednesday, 7:45 pm
- April 9 (morning)- Palm Sunday Service, 10:30 am
- April 9 (evening)- Litany of the Passion, 5:30 pm
- April 13- Maundy Thursday Eucharist and Meal, 5:30 pm
- April 14- Good Friday Stations of the Cross, 3 pm  
Good Friday Service, 5:30 pm
- April 15- Holy Saturday Vigil, Noon to Sunset
- April 16- Easter Sunrise Service and Breakfast, 8 am  
Easter Sunday Service, 10.30 am

Every Sunday, March 5<sup>th</sup> through April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 8:47 am, Lenten Study Group

Every Tuesday, March 7<sup>th</sup> through April 11<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 pm, Mid-Week Taizé Service 5:30 pm



### *Moderator's Message*

#### **Through the Lean Times**

The Alaska Aces are no more. A lot of folks are asking themselves, "Why did this happen in a city so clearly suited to hockey?"

Not being an avid fan of hockey, I can sit on the sidelines and observe the situation with some objectivity. When the team is winning games all the time, it's

fun to go cheer them on. You come home feeling somehow uplifted, and all is right with the world - and you didn't have to do anything but buy your ticket and have a good time.

When the team starts losing some games, it's not as much fun but still there's hope, and that keeps you buying your ticket and going to the games - well most of them anyway.

But what happens when your beloved team goes on a real losing streak? Sad to say, a lot of "die-hard" fans find another activity to cheer for or just stay home to watch TV.

And what happens to the team? Exactly what is happening to the Alaska Aces. Without ticket sales, they can't support a team, and so it goes away. And those fans who thought they would come back when the team got better are finding that there will be no team to come back to.

Now the analogy to our church is not exactly the same. I don't think anyone would say by any stretch of the imagination that we are having a "losing season" - we have far too many exciting activities going on for that to be the case. But let's be frank, our numbers on Sunday mornings are pretty dismal! Now I realize that wherever two or three are gathered in God's name, there God is also, but when a visitor comes in and sees such a small number of people, that does not reflect well on us as a church.

We are in an interim time. That is no time to stay home and see what happens. What if when you decide you want to come back, it's not there? We are the church. Without you, we become a little weaker. We need you to participate in all aspects of church life as you are able and one of those is attending Sunday services.

Shalom,  
Claudia Kniefel, Moderator

### *From the Pastoral Search Committee*

Eric Johnson  
Chair, Pastoral Search Committee

Since our Pastoral Search Committee was formed last April, we have met 23 times. The committee quickly formed a subcommittee to search for and select an interim minister. This led to the hiring of Rev. Johnathon in August. At that time Rev. JJ said that the process for selecting a new permanent senior minister could take as long as a year and a half (February of 2018.) Historically, the process can take up to two and half years.

We elected Sharon Higgins as our chair and began advertising on the National Association of Christian Congregational Churches (NACCC) webpage and in the *Congregationalist* magazine for a senior minister. We then began creating a Church Information Form (CIF) to acquaint interested ministers with our church. To do this we reviewed past questionnaires and requested a new questionnaire about the characteristics of our church. We also reviewed salary surveys of other churches our size to decide on what to offer. The CIF included budget information for the last five years.

While Sharon was in the hospital, Eric Johnson, was elected chair and after Sharon left the hospital, she decided that Eric should remain chair. We completed the CIF in time for the June NACCC meeting in Michigan. Sharon attended as our church's delegate and Eric as an alternate. NACCC set aside a room for churches looking for a minister where they could place a copy of their Church Information Form for ministers to read. We found that there were around 30 other churches searching for ministers. Luckily many of the churches were smaller than ours. Still, there are many other churches looking for ministers. Eric talked to a few ministers who were looking for positions but found no takers at that time.

Over the summer we advertised our position in the *Christian Century* magazine, both online and in print. We also advertised on two church online bulletin boards for church related jobs. These

included email notices to churches across the country. We have also advertised on many seminary job listings. We solicited recommendations for possible candidates from people we knew and cold-called these ministers to ask if they were interested in our position.

Since then the committee has received 12 resumes to evaluate. We also received several other requests for information that did not result in expressions of interest in our position. Of the 12 resumes received, seven removed themselves from consideration for one reason or another. The committee eliminated four candidates as not compatible with our church. In the process we listened to three of the candidates' sermons and have interviewed two candidates by phone and Skype (online). We are still in the process of evaluating one candidate.

This process seems slow at times, and I am asked many times when we might have a new minister. We actually found someone we liked very much, but when we called references and asked for further references, we found problems that led us to not consider the person further. Because we are trying to be careful for the church's sake, there is no way to predict how long this process will take. I will be available March 5<sup>th</sup> after church downstairs in Cary Mead Hall to answer any questions and take any suggestions you may have.

### *From Your Life and Learning Ministry*

Our children and Youth made birthday cards for Elgin Jones (the founder of Kid's Kitchen), and we sent them along with an extra donation of \$60.36 to honor him and support his work. Through Kid's Kitchen, children can have a hot, nutritious meal served by loving friends. Since this may be their only meal on some days, Elgin's work is literally life-saving.

In February the PF went to Fur Rondy for the snow sculptures, carnival rides, and funnel cakes! The spring Sunday School curriculum is focusing on Jesus's lessons for us on Service.

Life and Learning will be having a meeting Sunday, March 5, after church. We will be planning for Palm Sunday, the AKEELA donation drive, PF outings, and Youth Sunday.

### *From Your Worship Ministry*

Sandra Skaggs, Chair

The Worship Ministry has been working with the diligent assistance of Reverend Johnathan Jones, Caroline Valentine (our bell choir director and organist) and Lori Wasko (the choir director) to plan some interesting, thought-provoking, Lenten services for our FCC congregation. We look forward to listening to some of the beautiful music written and created for the Lenten season. This is the time for us to become inspired anew by our Christian faith and heritage. Let us remember that Christ died for us and showed us the way to follow him to eternal life.

Lynn Barber and Kathy Means have combined their ideas and talent with Reverend J.J. to also offer us informal, mid-week Taizé services. (see the calendar on page 5 and the Lenten Season/Easter Week insert in this newsletter).

The members of the Worship Ministry look forward to sharing these moments of prayer, renewal and music with you at our First Congregational Christian Church. Please come and bring a friend or family member to share our special services at this most holy time of the year.

### *From Your Outreach Ministry*

*Outreach Reaches Out*

Many thanks to those who made comfort caps for patients undergoing cancer treatment. We didn't have enough fleece to make scarves or baby blankets for the NICU, but we'll try again next year.

Our March 26<sup>th</sup> potluck, the annual "Bean-a-Fit," is a fundraiser for Bean's Café and will feature this year's award-winning soups. We will sell their bean bag soup mixes, so if you have any left over from last year, use them up now!! Beans are a healthy, low-calorie food and delicious cooked in soups.

Please bring a side dish and make a generous donation to help Bean's Café feed the homeless in our community while enjoying your meal.

Save the date- Saturday, April 15 is our next Grandfamilies Brunch. We had such a grand time at our December brunch! Plan to join us at this Easter-themed event. More details will be in the April newsletter with a sign-up sheet available in the Narthex.

### *From Your Fellowship Ministry*

We've had two lovely "Dine and Mind" events following our January and February potlucks. In January, Andy Serrano gave a talk about his and Jacquelyn's two years in Barrow (Utqiagvik), and in February, Lynn Barber showed us every one of the 307 birds she found during her 2016 Big (Alaska) Birding Year and kept us chuckling with her stories about searching for them.

Chris Walker is going to talk about her teacher mentoring job in rural Alaska villages this fall. Stay tuned for that.

The Fellowship Ministry doesn't meet regularly so if you have any ideas for future activities or speakers, please see Lynn Barber, Jeanette Dillon, or Kathy Means.

### *Whole Food Plant Based Group Meeting*

**Saturday, March 11th at 5:00 pm** you are invited to bring a whole food plant based dish and join a group meeting in Cary Mead Hall at First Congregational Church (2610 E. Northern Lights Blvd.) The purpose of this group will be to support one another on our plant based journeys. For whatever reason you may have decided to explore this option, our plan is to help each other by sharing recipes, resources, experiences, and encouragement. Please join us, and feel free to invite interested friends. For questions call Claudia at 240-7049. If you'd like more information on exactly what this is all about, go to Netflix and watch "Forks over Knives" or go to their "official" web site <https://www.forksoverknives.com/>

### *Facebook 101*

Watch for the next workshop – tentative topics will be Facebook groups, Instagram, and Twitter.



Nancy Wozniak (center, leaning to her left), helps us learn how to work and play safely in Facebook.



## *“Talking, Dreaming, Acting”*

By Sharon Higgins, NACCC Year-Round Delegate

[Note from Kate O’Dell: First Congregational Christian Church of Anchorage is a voluntary member of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC). Since we’re a non-denominational church, we’ve chosen to join with other Congregational churches across the country and around the world for resources, support, and collegial gatherings such as the Annual Meeting each summer.]

### **63rd Annual Meeting & Conference of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches**

Saturday, June 24 - Tuesday, June 27, 2017

Hosted by the Methodist Congregational Federated Church and hosted and held at Piedmont College, Demorest, Georgia  
 “Dreaming, Talking and Acting” is the theme of the upcoming NACCC Annual Meeting & Conference. Your hosts, Piedmont College and Demorest Methodist-Congregational Federated

Church, welcome you and look forward to a conference of renewal and fellowship. The theme is taken from a quotation by civil rights pioneer Lillian E. Smith, who attended Piedmont and lived nearby when she wrote about segregation in the U.S. from the 1940s to the 1960s. The four-day event will feature three Bible lectures by the Rev. Dr. Barbara Brown Taylor, the Harry R. Butman Professor of Religion at Piedmont and author of 13 books on preaching and religion.

While here, take time to experience the natural beauty and local attractions of northeast Georgia. Demorest may be a small town, but it is big on hospitality and Congregational history. Piedmont College, where many of you will be staying, was founded in 1897, and has been affiliated with Congregational churches since 1901. A short walk brings you to the historic Methodist Congregational Federated Church, which was built in 1908.

Demorest is in the green foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and there are nine state and national parks nearby, including lakes Russell and Burton in Habersham County and Lake Lanier Islands Water Park. Whether you drive through the Blue Ridge Mountains, or walk the many scenic trails, there are waterfalls, trout streams, and mountain views to explore in every direction. You can visit and dine at more than a half-dozen local wineries, or spend a day on the links at some of Georgia’s most beautiful golf courses. Northeast Georgia is home to numerous small towns that take pride in retaining their mountain heritage. You’ll find plenty of restaurants in Demorest, Cornelia, and Clarkesville, or venture out to the City of Helen, modeled after a Bavarian village, just up the road.

The cities of Athens, Atlanta, and Greenville (S.C.) are an easy drive. In Atlanta, you can take in a Braves’ game in their new stadium, or visit the renowned Atlanta Zoo, Aquarium, or Stone Mountain Park. Atlanta is also home to the Carter Center Library and Museum, the Martin Luther King Jr. Historic Site, and the High Museum of Art. For more information, start with a visit to [www.piedmont.edu/naccc2017](http://www.piedmont.edu/naccc2017).

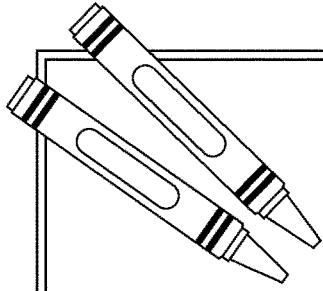
For registration information go to the web site

([http://www.naccc.org/uploads/6/0/0/9/6009825/registration\\_brochure-full-final.pdf](http://www.naccc.org/uploads/6/0/0/9/6009825/registration_brochure-full-final.pdf)) The brochure includes details about the program, housing, tourist attractions, and a special rate on Delta Airlines. You can also talk to Kate O’Dell or Sharon Higgins if you’ve never been to an NACCC meeting and have questions.

# March 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<b>1</b> 5:15 Handbell Choir 6:30 Choir 7:00 Wings of Love Assembly 7:45 Ash Wednesday Service	<b>2</b> 1:00 Primary Purpose 6:00 Inner Peace 6:30 Investment Club	<b>3</b> 4:30-8:30 Clear Water Church Prayer Service	<b>4</b> 9:30-noon Organist 12-4 Crow Creek Meeting
<b>5</b> 8:47 Lenten Study Group 8:45 Handbells 9:30 Choir 10:30 Worship/Sunday School 11:30 Fellowship Hour 12:15 Life & Learning Ministry 12:15 Worship Ministry 2:00 Wings of Love Assembly	<b>6</b> 6:30 Primary Purpose	<b>7</b> 5:30 Lent Taizé Service 5:30 C.C.P.D	<b>8</b> 5:15 Handbell Choir 6:30 Choir 7-9 Anchorage Audubon talk 7:00 Wings of Love Assembly	<b>9</b> 1:00 Primary Purpose 5:30 Interfaith Council – APU Carr-Gottstein Bldg. 6:00 Inner Peace	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 9:30-noon Organist 9:30-1:30 Weavers and Spinners Guild 5:00 Whole Food Plant-Based Group Meeting
<b>12 Girl Scout Sunday</b> 8:47 Lenten Study Group 9:30 Choir 10:30 Worship/No Sunday School 11:30 Fellowship Hour 12:15 Outreach Ministry 2:00 Wings of Love Assembly  Daylight Saving Time Begins	<b>13</b> 6:30 Primary Purpose	<b>14</b> 5:30 Lent Taizé Service 6:30 Stewardship Ministry 5:30 C.C.P.D	<b>15</b> 5:15 Handbell Choir 6:30 Choir 7:00 Wings of Love Assembly	<b>16</b> 10-1 Mabel T. Caverly Social 1:00 Primary Purpose 6:00 Inner Peace	<b>17 St. Patrick's Day</b> 6:00 Family Game Night & St. Paddy's Dinner	<b>18</b> 9:30-noon Organist 11:00 Irish Club of Alaska Board
<b>19</b> Communion Sunday 8:47 Lenten Study Group 9:30 Choir 10:30 Worship/No Sunday School 11:30 Fellowship Hour 12:15 FCC Church Council 2:00 Wings of Love Assembly	<b>20</b> First Day of Spring 4:00 Wedding (very small)? 6:30 Primary Purpose	<b>21</b> 5:30 Lent Taizé Service 5:30 C.C.P.D	<b>22</b> 5:15 Handbell Choir 6:30 Choir 7:00 Wings of Love Assembly	<b>23</b> 1:00 Primary Purpose 6:00 Inner Peace	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 9:30-noon Organist
<b>26</b> 8:47 Lenten Study Group 9:30 Choir 10:30 Worship/No Sunday School 11:30 Fellowship Hour 11:45 Potluck: Bean-a-Fit (Outreach Ministry) Pilgrim Fellowship Activity 2:00 Wings of Love Assembly	<b>27</b> 6:30 Primary Purpose	<b>28</b> 5:30 Lent Taizé Service 5:30 C.C.P.D	<b>29</b> 5:15 Handbell Choir 6:30 Choir 7:00 Wings of Love Assembly	<b>30</b> 1:00 Primary Purpose 6:00 Inner Peace	<b>31</b> 6:00 Church Assessment Leadership Seminar	

The most up-to-date calendar is available on the website ([www.fccak.org](http://www.fccak.org))

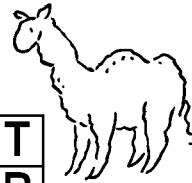
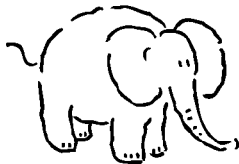


# Just for **KIDS**

## ***Hop on the Bus?***

In Bible times it was not easy for people to travel or to transport items. There were no buses or airplanes or bicycles or cars or moving vans. So how did the people travel? How did they move things from place to place?

Find some answers in the Scriptures. Find others from hints given below. Fit the words into the puzzle.



Genesis 24:61 . . . . .

Genesis 22:3 . . . . .

Hybrids, Psalm 32:9 . . . . .

Acts 27:2 . . . . .

James 3:3 . . . . .

1 Samuel 6:7 . . . . .

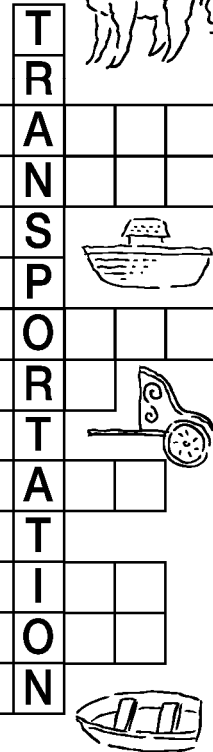
Need washing often, Genesis 18:4 . . . . .

Used in war and also for their ivory . . . . .

Acts 8:28 . . . . .

Matthew 4:21 . . . . .

Had wheels of wood . . . . .



Puzzle answers on p. 9 of this newsletter.



## FCC People

### Interim Minister

Rev. Johnathan C. Jones  
907-444-0869,  
907-272-8363 (work)  
Revjj.fcccak@gmail.com

Caroline Valentine, Organist,  
Director, Northern Lights  
Ringers

Lori Wasco  
Director, Chancel Choir

June Skinner  
Nursery Attendant

## Contacts

### Administrative Assistant & Editor

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### FCC Church Sexton

Scott McClure 272-8363

### Wedding Coordinator

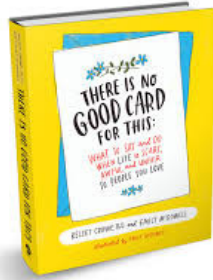
Barbara Widtfeldt 377-1673

### Serving the NACCC

Sharon Higgins,  
Year-Round Delegate

### Serving the PNACCC

Claudia Kniefel  
2017 Delegate



*There Is No Good Card for This: What to say and do when life is scary, awful, and unfair to people you love*, by Kelsey Crowe and Emily McDowell. (2017). New York: Harper Collins Publishers, ISBN 9780062469991.

The blurb: “This groundbreaking, visually stunning guide to help you feel confident in supporting anyone experiencing grief, illness, or any other tough situation blends the research and expertise of empathy

expert Dr. Kelsey Crowe with the no-nonsense humor and signature style of Emily McDowell’s immensely popular Empathy™ Cards, creating an actionable, practical handbook to compassion when it really counts.”

Kate’s comments: As your Administrative Assistant, I feel it’s part of my position description to “do something” when I learn about challenges that members of our family are facing. In many cases, my reaction is perfectly described on p. 4 of this wonderful book: “Whatever it is, a person’s life has just fallen apart, and you feel awful, and you also have no %\$#! clue what to say, let alone do.” My second thoughts tend to keep me from doing anything because I’m worried I’ll say or do “the wrong thing” and make the person’s situation worse or make me lose a friend.

In the first chapter, Crowe and McDowell begin the process of helping us by pointing out that we are not alone. “This is something virtually everyone wrestles with at some point.” From the first page to the last, the authors share both their life experiences and what they’ve learned from their personal and professional work and research. The book’s style is very conversational (some of the language is pretty “salty,”) as if you’re sitting in one of their workshops or around the table in a book study group. One unique section gives suggestions for things to say and do if you’re dealing with a situation that you don’t usually find a Hallmark card for such as unemployment, fertility struggles and miscarriage, or divorce.

I especially valued that the authors don’t set themselves up as know-it-alls or as givers of panaceas. One day soon I’m going to find a friend who will also read the book and then join me in some of the exercises. (Maybe we could do this together as a church family.) The goal is, as Crowe and McDowell explain, “If we want to be someone people trust and reach out to, we need to trust ourselves. That doesn’t mean being perfect. It simply means being who we are.”

[You can see examples of Emily McDowell’s unique Empathy™ Cards at <https://emilymcdowell.com/collections/birthday-cards>. You can also purchase the cards, tote bags, etc. at the web site.]

## Puzzle Answers:

Camel, Donkey, Mules, Ship,  
Horse, Cart, Feet, Elephant,  
Chariot, Boat, Wagon

